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DUTCH ARTISTS OF THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS.

BY JOHAN GRAMM.

I.

I have been asked to write something for you about the artists in Holland whose reputation has come up within the last twenty-five years.

Names like Mauve, the Maris brothers, Israels, Neuhuys, Blommers and some others are familiar in America. The Dutch painters are, however, very numerous and I will endeavor to tell you something about the men of whom, perhaps, you may have never heard.

We have here portrait painters of great reputation. JAN VETH has many chords on his bow. Now his subtle handling reminds one of Memlinck, then again do his sharp outlines make you think of the great Holbein. But no matter which famous predecessor is brought to mind by his art, Veth always proves himself to be a master of form, an observer of the intimate character of his sitter, a painter who is thoroughly conversant with the technique of his art. One has a peculiar feeling of admiration for his carefully executed, fine and smooth portraits that are like old miniatures. They are so thin and delicately brushed, porcelain-like, reminding of the primitifs. But the execution, the power of method, the rare knowledge of form and line, the soul laid in this work—all that makes the art of Jan Veth something very particular and individual.

Directly opposed to this scrupulous delineation are the portraits painted by THÉRÈSE SCHWARTZE, who, without exaggerating breadth of handling, gives more body and more sculptural roundness to her portraits. The first charcoal inlay of these, rapidly thrown down, later to be covered with the pigment, always is a treat for its force and ripeness.

Mrs. GRANDMONT-HUBRECHT and Prof. VAN DER WAAY are portrait painters, famous for the remarkable likeness which they produce.

P. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG has received a great many prominent people in his studio, whose portraits he has produced with distinction and expressiveness. No less important, however, are this artist's presentations of factory life. His mechanics in the dark workshop, where the heavy hammer thunders, and the iron flows like brilliant lava, are counterfeited by him to life.

VAN DER MAAREL is also best known as a portrait painter. His portraits are distinguished in color and tone. The lighting of the model is oftentimes capricious and affected, but the result is always delightful.

We have a little artists' colony at Duinoord, between The Hague and Scheveningen, which is called "the United States Quartet," because it is said that they have much doing with American buyers. They are Martens, Steelink, Van Essen and Van der Weele. WILLY MARTENS used to paint formerly with much talent coquettes from the beau-monde in their delicate boudoirs, filled, it seemed, with Rimmel's perfumery—now he devotes himself entirely to the common people that toil around Nunspeet.

It went just so with WILM STEELINK, once an excellent engraver and etcher in Amsterdam and who painted at first dandy-like ladies and gentlemen of the wig-period with much grace and talent. But one day he says good-bye to all these nice people and goes forth with his paint-box to the fields and the woods to paint the meadows and sheep. Since then, he has become a spoilt child of Nature, who has told him all her secrets, the freshness of the heath, the charm of the hilly landscape, the brightness of sunny atmosphere. Sometimes you may take him for a twin brother of Mauve, although he never attempts to imitate his great predecessor.

H. J. VAN DER WEELE is an earnest worker, who clings to Nature and

is inspired by her. You can see it in the strong and healthy impressions of out-doors which he always gives—an old woman gathering fagots; or a flock of sheep in a shady corner; or an autumn scene.

JAN VAN ESSEN also changed his genre. First he drew his subjects from the typical Amsterdam *bourgeoisie*, which he changed later for the inhabitants of the Zoo: lions and tigers and other captives. He, certainly, has given us some magnificent stillives, as, for instance, a dead heron and a hare, which is as good as a Fyt or a Snyder. But lately he has been painting landscapes, and they are immensely interesting and beautiful. Van Essen is a passionate hunter and some years ago he had the misfortune, through the carelessness of a companion, to lose his left hand—but it does not seem to make any difference to our artist, he paints just as well as ever, and better.

Another man who changed his subjects is A. H. BREITNER, who came as a boy of sixteen to the Hague Academy with the best composition ever submitted by an aspirant. He worked hard and soon produced a canvas, with galloping dragoons, that was wonderful in its action—you could see the dust fly. Later he devoted himself to the tram-car horse and then to those picturesque scenes of newly laid-out streets with the inevitable heavy dray-horses carting the building materials, or other city views, which make him the Dutch Brangwyn. He is a mighty colorist.

Entirely in Breitner's spirit, but with something very individual, is the work of DE ZWART who seeks to express the mighty contrasts of nature: a shining sun and dark shadows, or a delightful combination of deep colors in his magnificent stillives. It was a good many years before this colorist became recognized.

Another painter of city views is F. ARNTZENIUS. The shining, wet street during or after a shower is his favorite. How cleverly he hits off the sturdy butcher's boy, carrying his basket; how daintily do his damsels trip along with anxiously tipped-up skirts. Every figure is just so, everything glimmers and drips and steams. The public likes his work and buys it as soon as it leaves his studio.

Young MARTINUS SCHILT also finds his models from the types of common life. His conception is healthy and vigorous and wonderfully exact.

He is from Rotterdam, like I. H. VAN MASTENBROEK, who paints pithy, snappy river views. His artistic presentation is very attractive as he portrays the crush and turmoil and turbulence of the harbor of a large city. His quick, pliant brush paints away for dear life, so that we sometimes gasp and would like greater calm—but we turn, nevertheless, always with pleasure, to these quay-scenes with ships and stevedores, with heavy clouds hanging overhead.

I will close this first article with a reference to one of our most effective painters, J. S. H. KEVER. Just as Whistler signed his canvases with a butterfly, you might think that Kever's signature is a little blond curly-head—it always appears in his pictures. And how lovely and beautiful are his compositions. They are so attractive in the tender story they tell of the cabin life of the peasants, and the child episodes which he portrays so charmingly. He paints with thoughtfulness to nature subordinated to higher ends and shows a distinct individual interpretation of the scenes he witnesses. His pictures always awaken a responsive echo in the observer.

The Scott & Fowles Company has recently received examples of the Modern Dutch School of exceptional quality, among them being a very fine Israels and a superb canvas by Weissenbruch.